



Consumer Expenditure Survey: Quarterly Data from the Interview Survey

Fourth quarter 1994

U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Report 901

CONTIN

This report presents selected expenditure data classified by different types of consumer units for the fourth quarter of 1994 from the Interview component of the Consumer Expenditure Survey.¹ Comparisons with the fourth quarter of previous years are made for all consumer units (see table A). This report also describes how to obtain the survey data in new formats.

New formats for Consumer Expenditure Survey data. The Consumer Expenditure Survey has taken advantage of new technologies to more efficiently provide BLS customers with consumer expenditure data. The data are now available on Compact Disks-Read Only Memory (CD-ROM), the Internet and World Wide Web, and FAX-on-demand.

CD-ROM. Microdata on consumer expenditures, income, and socioeconomic characteristics for 1992 and 1993 are now available on CD-ROM. The microdata from both the Interview and Diary surveys are in flat files from which users can extract and manipulate the data using data processing programs such as SAS and SPSS.

The CD-ROM also contains tabulated expenditure data by selected characteristics. These are the same data that BLS makes available on diskettes. The tabulated data cover the period 1984 through the current published year, 1993.

The tabulated data on the CD-ROM are classified by 11 standard characteristics including quintiles of income, income before taxes, age of reference person, size of consumer unit, composition of consumer unit, number of earners in consumer unit, housing tenure, race of reference person, type of area, region of residence, and occupation of reference person. They are also classified by income before taxes, and cross-tabulated by age, family size, or region. Tabulations for selected Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA's) are also on this CD-ROM, as well as tabulations for single persons classified by sex, cross-tabulated by age or by income.

Microdata for 1980 through 1993 are also available from the BLS on public use tapes.

Internet and World Wide Web. Consumer Expenditure Survey data can be accessed via the Internet at the BLS site, STATS.BLS.GOV. Once at the site, select, in order, "PUB," "SPECIAL.REQUESTS," and then "CE". The CE menu includes frequently asked questions, a consumer expenditure glossary of terms, diskette, tape, and CD-ROM order forms, and a read me file explaining the Consumer Expenditure Survey. tabulated data on the Internet are the same as those on the CD-ROM, described above. They are available for 1984 through 1993. World Wide Web users should go to [HTTP:STATS.BLS.GOV](http://STATS.BLS.GOV) to access the same information. Web users should select, in order, hypertext for "Surveys and Programs," "Prices and Living Conditions," and "Consumer Expenditure Survey." The same data can be accessed at [HTTP:WWW.CENSUS.GOV](http://WWW.CENSUS.GOV) by selecting "Data Access Tools," choosing HTML, and then following menu instructions.

FAX-on-demand—FAXSTAT. FAXSTAT contains information and data that can be accessed from a touch-tone phone and faxed to you quickly—24 hours a day, 7 days a week—by dialing (202) 606-6FAX. Once dialed, voice prompts will explain how to obtain the information. Information can be requested in two ways. First, follow voice menus and press the appropriate keys as prompted. Or, if a FAXSTAT instruction page has been obtained, the desired information can be obtained using a speed-dial code that allows users to jump directly to the document needed. The Consumer Expenditure Survey has placed 9 tables (11 standard characteristics) and an explanatory note on this system. Data available on FAXSTAT are for the most recent published year.

¹ Estimates of quarterly expenditures are less reliable than annual estimates because of the smaller number of observations per quarter.

Table A. Selected average quarterly annualized expenditures¹ of consumer units, interview survey, fourth quarters, 1988-94

Item	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Total expenditures	\$26,377	\$27,730	\$28,001	\$28,895	\$28,486	\$29,951	\$31,105
Food	3,888	4,243	4,295	4,313	4,317	4,438	4,438
Food at home	2,825	3,080	3,205	3,235	3,214	3,281	3,252
Food away from home	1,063	1,162	1,089	1,077	1,103	1,157	1,186
Housing ²	8,332	8,785	8,948	8,825	8,768	9,207	9,848
Shelter ²	5,005	5,282	5,511	5,288	5,277	5,428	5,808
Owned dwellings	3,034	3,254	3,488	3,297	3,230	3,342	3,738
Rented dwellings	1,486	1,526	1,538	1,873	1,748	1,738	1,818
Other lodging ²	473	512	507	316	301	350	313
Utilities, fuels, and public services	1,755	1,888	1,825	2,004	2,010	2,158	2,128
Householdings and operations	1,572	1,807	1,512	1,534	1,481	1,822	1,853
Apparel and services	1,818	1,907	1,809	1,814	1,848	1,857	1,805
Transportation	4,853	4,789	4,911	4,882	5,212	5,483	5,743
Vehicle purchases	2,225	1,833	1,888	1,831	2,229	2,481	2,531
Gasoline and motor oil	903	985	1,079	955	974	953	987
Other transportation expenses	1,725	1,901	1,867	2,007	2,008	2,050	2,225
Health care	1,321	1,357	1,402	1,419	1,553	1,824	1,838
Entertainment	1,508	1,487	1,527	1,735	1,834	1,753	1,753
All other expenses ³	4,558	5,143	5,109	5,897	5,185	5,809	6,091

See footnotes at end of tables.

Table 1. Quintiles of income before taxes: Average quarterly expenditures¹ of all consumer units, interview survey, fourth quarter, 1994

Item	All consumer units	Complete reporting of income						Incomplete reporting of income
		Total complete reporting	Lowest 20 percent	Second 20 percent	Third 20 percent	Fourth 20 percent	Highest 20 percent	
Number of consumer units (in thousands)	103,125	85,438	17,042	17,085	17,085	17,085	17,109	17,889
Number of sample interviews	5,087	4,216	794	821	844	844	913	871
Consumer unit characteristics:								
Income before taxes ⁴	\$37,143	\$37,143	\$6,872	\$16,279	\$28,078	\$44,580	\$89,781	(4)
Average number of persons in consumer unit	2.5	2.5	1.9	2.3	2.6	2.9	3.1	2.5
Age of reference person	47.4	47.4	51.2	50.4	45.5	44.4	45.7	47.0
Number in consumer unit:								
Earners	1.3	1.3	.8	.9	1.3	1.7	2.0	1.3
Vehicles	1.9	1.9	.9	1.4	2.0	2.5	2.8	1.8
Children under 18	.7	.7	.5	.8	.7	.8	.9	.7
Persons 65 and over	.3	.3	.4	.5	.3	.2	.1	.3
Total expenditures	\$31,105	\$32,041	\$13,074	\$20,483	\$28,003	\$38,178	\$60,408	\$38,884
Food	4,438	4,484	2,848	3,488	4,119	5,085	6,824	4,381
Housing	9,848	9,842	4,834	8,801	8,487	10,854	17,315	9,578
Shelter	5,888	5,837	2,758	4,119	5,185	6,548	10,583	6,080
Owned dwellings	3,738	3,888	943	1,871	2,872	4,433	8,807	4,075
Rented dwellings	1,818	1,837	1,716	2,213	2,289	1,785	1,223	1,728
Other lodging	313	332	86	234	225	351	754	219
Utilities, fuels, and public services	2,128	2,108	1,384	1,802	2,048	2,348	2,861	2,221
Householdings and operations	1,853	1,897	494	881	1,278	2,059	3,771	1,437
Apparel and services	1,805	1,844	889	1,084	1,588	2,173	3,732	1,820
Transportation	5,743	5,888	1,857	3,673	5,757	7,510	10,887	5,185
Gasoline and motor oil	987	980	485	719	1,009	1,382	1,483	973
Other transportation expenses	4,756	4,908	1,182	2,854	4,748	6,348	9,175	4,222
Health care	1,838	1,822	921	1,489	1,540	1,782	2,388	1,703
Entertainment	1,753	1,813	783	1,030	1,514	2,073	3,889	1,488
All other expenses ³	6,091	6,810	1,805	2,878	5,030	8,889	15,712	2,882

See footnotes at end of tables.

Table 2. Age of reference person: Average quarterly expenditures¹ of all consumer units, interview survey, fourth quarter, 1994

Item	All consumer units	Under 25	25-44	45-64	65 and over
Number of consumer units (in thousands)	103,125	8,076	43,205	30,739	21,105
Number of sample interviews	5,087	417	2,146	1,528	886
Consumer unit characteristics:					
Income before taxes ⁴	\$37,143	\$17,289	\$41,330	\$46,108	\$23,483
Average number of persons in consumer unit	2.5	1.9	3.0	2.6	1.7
Age of reference person	47.4	21.6	34.8	53.3	74.4
Number in consumer unit:					
Earners	1.3	1.2	1.8	1.6	.4
Vehicles	1.9	1.2	2.0	2.4	1.4
Children under 18	.7	.5	1.2	.4	.1
Persons 65 and over	.3	(5)	(5)	.1	1.3
Total expenditures	\$31,105	\$17,672	\$33,935	\$36,846	\$22,086
Food	4,436	2,630	4,821	5,075	3,342
Housing	9,848	5,503	10,808	10,976	6,722
Shelter	5,888	3,551	6,794	6,678	3,683
Owned dwellings	3,738	400	4,085	5,037	2,412
Rented dwellings	1,818	2,980	2,477	1,201	824
Other lodging	313	171	232	440	347
Utilities, fuels, and public services	2,128	1,179	2,172	2,445	1,838
Household furnishings and operations	1,853	773	1,943	1,853	1,102
Apparel and services	1,805	1,182	2,042	2,146	1,086
Transportation	5,743	3,821	6,550	6,842	3,515
Gasoline and motor oil	987	636	1,089	1,196	607
Other transportation expenses	4,756	3,183	5,461	5,646	2,908
Health care	1,636	484	1,349	1,858	2,550
Entertainment	1,753	1,182	2,161	1,802	820
All other expenses ⁵	6,081	2,892	6,203	8,251	3,988

See footnotes at end of tables.

Table 3. Region of residence: Average quarterly expenditures¹ of all consumer units, interview survey, fourth quarter, 1994

Item	All consumer units	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Number of consumer units (in thousands)	103,125	20,480	28,191	34,783	21,671
Number of sample interviews	5,087	1,076	1,374	1,530	1,107
Consumer unit characteristics:					
Income before taxes ⁴	\$37,143	\$39,813	\$33,786	\$34,803	\$42,045
Average number of persons in consumer unit	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.6
Age of reference person	47.4	46.2	47.0	47.4	45.9
Number in consumer unit:					
Earners	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.4
Vehicles	1.9	1.5	2.2	1.8	2.1
Children under 18	.7	.7	.7	.7	.7
Persons 65 and over	.3	.4	.3	.3	.3
Total expenditures	\$31,105	\$31,289	\$30,137	\$29,828	\$33,980
Food	4,436	4,837	4,180	4,275	4,635
Housing	9,848	10,473	9,022	8,883	11,160
Shelter	5,888	6,679	5,266	5,030	7,176
Owned dwellings	3,738	4,231	3,554	3,181	4,388
Rented dwellings	1,818	2,078	1,401	1,589	2,477
Other lodging	313	370	311	280	312
Utilities, fuels, and public services	2,128	2,216	2,057	2,172	2,058
Household furnishings and operations	1,853	1,578	1,700	1,480	1,828
Apparel and services	1,805	1,991	1,803	1,880	1,819
Transportation	5,743	5,130	5,704	5,934	6,082
Gasoline and motor oil	987	833	989	1,046	1,036
Other transportation expenses	4,756	4,297	4,714	4,888	5,028
Health care	1,636	1,687	1,617	1,702	1,486
Entertainment	1,753	1,683	1,674	1,683	1,636
All other expenses ⁵	6,081	5,807	6,838	5,972	6,971

¹ The expenditures are estimates for a particular quarter presented at annual rates (the values are multiplied by 4).

² The item "expenses for other properties" is included in miscellaneous expenditures beginning in 1991. Prior to 1991 it was included in shelter and housing.

³ Includes alcoholic beverages, reading, education, tobacco, miscellaneous expenditures, personal care, cash contributions, personal insurance and pensions.

⁴ Income values are derived from "complete reporters" only; see technical note.

⁵ Value less than 0.05.

Technical Note

Data in this report are from the Interview portion of the Consumer Expenditure Survey, conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The survey consists of two components: (1) a Diary or recordkeeping survey completed by respondents for two consecutive 1-week periods, and (2) an Interview survey in which the expenditures of consumer units are obtained in five interviews conducted every 3 months. The data are collected in independent samples of consumer units that are representative of the U.S. population. The Interview sample, selected on a rotating panel basis, consists of approximately 5,000 consumer units each quarter.

The Interview survey data include large expenditures, such as property, automobiles, and major appliances, or expenditures that occur on a regular basis, such as rent, utility payments, or insurance premiums. The Interview survey covers approximately 95 percent of all expenditures.

There are limitations to these data which should be mentioned. First, for some analytical uses, the data should be seasonally adjusted. BLS is working on a seasonal adjustment method, which requires several years of data. In the absence of computed adjustment factors, one may make comparisons with the same quarter of the previous year or earlier years. Second, for infrequently purchased items there are fewer reports in a quarter than there are for a year. In order to obtain statistically reliable estimates, a sufficient level of reporting is required. Therefore, the tables based on quarterly data show less detail than those based on annual data. In addition, quarterly data tend to be more volatile than annual data.

This report uses a new format to allow more room for analysis of special topics. The "Income before taxes" table is no longer published in the quarterly report but can be obtained from the Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys.

Brief definitions

Consumer unit. (1) All members of a particular household who are related by blood, marriage, adoption, or other legal arrangements; (2) a person living alone or sharing a household with others or living as a roomer in a private home or lodging house or in permanent living quarters in a hotel or motel, but who is financially independent; or (3) two or more persons living together who share responsibility for at least 2 out of 3 major types of expenses—food, housing, and other expenses. The terms household or consumer are used for convenience.

Complete income reporters. In general, a complete income reporter is a respondent who provided values for at least one of the major sources of income, such as wages and salaries, self-employment income, and Social Security income. Even complete income reporters may not have provided a full accounting of all income from all sources.

Total expenditures. These are the transaction costs, including excise and sales taxes, of goods and services acquired during the interview period. The averages include expenditures for gifts and contributions and payments for pensions and personal insurance.

Information in this report is available to sensory impaired individuals. Voice phone: (202) 606-7828; TDD phone (202) 606-5879; TDD message referral phone: 1-800-326-2577.

For further information, contact Brian Riordon, Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Room 3985, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 2022-0001. Telephone: (202) 606-6900.

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